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Important Dates

- ◆ Last class day 4-28-2019
- ◆ Graduation: 5-11-2019
- ◆ Fall Semester: 8-26-2019
- ◆ Add/Drop ends: 8-31-2019
- ◆ Labor Day: 9-2-2019
- ◆ Last Day for W: 11-1-2019
- ◆ Fall Break:
11-25-2019 -to- 11-29-2019
- ◆ Last Class Day: 12-6-2019



The Heartbreak of Alzheimer's

Maura Linehan

According to the World Health Organization (2016), Alzheimer's will directly impact over 75 million people by 2030. It is likely that you know, or will know someone with AD. When this happens, there are ways you will be able to help.

The World Health Organization (2016), found that 47.5 million people in the world suffer with some form of dementia, and 60-70% are related to Alzheimer's disease (AD). From Feldman (2017) we know that AD results in both significant memory loss and declines in mental function. These declines reflect underlying changes in important aspects of the brain's physiology. As a result, activities focus on strengthening any surviving cognitive functions.

If you are in a caregiving role, you should remember that every person is unique. So, what might work for one person may not work for another; don't be too discouraged if what seemed like a great idea at first doesn't work out.

To address declines, music related activities often provide engagement and yield positive results (Satoh, et al., 2014). Songs from their younger days are typically well remembered. If you can combine music with exercise, the additional benefits will be worthwhile (especially if you can make this a regular activity).

According to Bergland's (2014) survey of the research, there are eight habits that can improve cognitive function. Of those, "Dance Exercise" addresses at least four: Physical Activity, Openness to Experience, Curiosity and Creativity, as well as Social Connections.

Don't feel that every bit of time must be filled with an activity. Just comforting a loved one with AD is all that may be needed. Simply letting them know they are not alone can relieve a great deal of stress, anxiety, and confusion they may be feeling (McGee & Myers, 2014). Know that as heartbreaking as it may feel, even when

the spark of recognition is missing, your presence can still provide them with comfort.

Finally, caregivers have to take care of themselves as well; take a break and develop a support system of your own (Kallie & Donahue, 2011). Providing constant care can be stressful, but there is also the personal reward that comes from knowing you've improved the life of the person you love.

CONGRATULATIONS

2018-2019 RMU Psi Chi awards:

Jiabi He
Academic Excellence
Maura Linehan
Excellence in Leadership

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Tips on Conducting a Research Project

I am currently conducting research for my honors thesis. Although I am required to write a thesis for the honors program, all psychology students have the option of writing a thesis. I would strongly suggest you do so, especially if you are planning on going to graduate school. It is a great way to explore conducting research and can help you delve further into a topic you are curious about. Plus, it can be really fun.

An important but difficult thing to do when starting your thesis is to find a topic you are interested in. This means a lot of reading as you explore articles about topics you might want to look into. You are going to be working on your thesis for at least a year, so it is best if you like your topic. One tip is to pick a topic related to a career or field you are interested in.

I want to be an art therapist, so I started by looking into what research has been done in art therapy. This led me to the realization that there hasn't been much about technology use in art

therapy. Almost everyone carries a smartphone and there are many applications (apps) that claim to reduce anxiety, but there has been no research about whether the apps actually work.

Once you have finalized your research question, you will need to design an experiment or a non-experiment to collect data about your question. Data collection can be challenging because of the availability of research volunteers and your own limited time.

Sometimes you may need to tweak your research question, population sample, or even your whole design. For example, I wanted to conduct my research at a local children's hospital. However, the people in charge of research at the hospital informed me it wouldn't be possible, so I had to change my research plan to gather similar data using college students.

The next step the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. This is required for anyone who is conducting research that involves human subjects. It helps

prevent harm to subjects. It also takes some time to fill out, and, depending on your design, can take a while before it is finally approved. So, make sure you fill it out as early and completely as possible.

This is as far as I have gotten in the research process. I still have to gather and analyze the data and then present my findings at a conference.

One final tip I have to give you is to make sure you have a timeline set to accomplish all the steps and **STICK TO IT!** It will help keep you on track so you don't get to the end of the semester without enough time left to analyze data and write the final paper.

I am very excited to conduct my research, and I hope these tips help you conduct yours. Good Luck and have fun!

By Rebecca Held

The CM-Experiment

Free snacks! Free drinks! A free psychology experiment! What could be better?

If you are looking for something fun to do, you should come out and join us for one of Psi Chi's legendary events... the **CM-EXPERIMENT!** It is only offered once a semester and space is limited to 30 participants. So you should keep a sharp eye out for the invitation when it is posted around campus! Our next experiment is scheduled for the Fall semester and will likely take place one evening (plan on about two hours).

You may be wondering what CM stands for, but that will have to wait for the debriefing. We keep that under wraps as best we can. Besides, what fun would it be to ruin the surprise!?

The CM Experiments have been well attended by RMU students since its first appearance back in the fall semester of

2011. I can guarantee you would have a great time as students routinely ask to stay later and if they can volunteer for the next one. (The answer is usually "yes" to both questions.)

You can arrive by yourself or bring one or more friends. All are welcome up to the participation limit of 30 volunteers. Please consider joining us.

We had a pretty good turnout for the previous experiment (**CM08-F18**). The snacks are top-notch quality and according to participants, the time flies by. Come prepared with your thinking caps on. And remember, this is a psychology experiment, so you will be using your mind most of the time.

The officers of Psi Chi hope to see you at the next event (**CM09-F19**)! Of course **CM10-S20** is around the corner, so you can try to make that one if you missed the last experiment!

By Nora Barckak

***Psi Chi**
Presents

EXPERIMENT
CM08-F18

Please join us for a psychological experience where YOU become the independent variable ...

Date: **Wednesday, November 7, 2018**
Time: **9:00 PM**
Duration: **Approximately two hours**
Location: **PNC Cafeteria**

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS SERVED
RESERVATIONS LIMITED TO 30 PEOPLE

To reserve your spot, contact any of the following:

Psi Chi Faculty Advisor: Dr. Paul (paul@rmu.edu) or call 5416 (leave a message)
Psi Chi Chapter Vice President: Maurs Linchou (mmdl211@mail.rmu.edu)

*Psi Chi is the International Honor Society in Psychology

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

By Rebecca Held

On Friday, November 9, 2018, Dr. Paul's *Psychology of Learning* Class went to the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium to learn about the practical applications of operant conditioning.

At the zoo, they involve aspects of operant conditioning through the use of positive and negative rewards to increase or decrease the prevalence of specific behaviors. As we learned from our educational guide at the zoo, Mandy Revak, the zoo uses lots of operant conditioning to train their animals. They focus mainly on positive reinforcement, such as food, to train various animals to do what they want. Positive reinforcement is such a powerful form of operant conditioning that almost all animals at the zoo are trained, from fish and alligators to lions and elephants. But why would an animal at the zoo need to be trained

in the first place? Well, the main reason is to make medical treatment easier and safer for both the animals and the staff members. Before the days of operant conditioning, animals had to be sedated for most treatments. Now, however, trainers can simply give a hand motion to the animal and it will respond accordingly. This allows them to inspect the animal's mouth and range of motion, and even line the animal up with the side of a cage to inject shots. Throughout our tour of the zoo, we got to see several animals being trained, such as sea lions, elephant seals, and otters. We also got to see a baby alligator, a macaw, clouded leopards, and sharks. As we saw each animal, their trainers gave us additional information about each animal their training. We got to ask as



many questions as we wanted, and the staff members were extremely helpful in answering them. Because of this trip, I was able to correlate real-world examples with the theoretical knowledge learnt in class. I believe this field trip was an invaluable experience to the psychology of learning class, and I encourage every student to attend if given the

More Irrational?

Tug-of-War Strength. Students at the University of Massachusetts participated in a rope-pull game either individually or within a group of five others. The researchers (Ingham, Levinger, Graves, & Peckman, 1974) measured pulling intensity in both conditions. How did the effort compare between performance in a group vs. performance individually?

Sneaky People. Gino and Ariely (2012) provided students the opportunity to perform a visual perceptual task. The researchers contrived the situation so that there was a chance for students to be sneaky and cheat on the task in order

From Dan Ariely's *Irrational* (irrationalgame.com)

to earn money. In addition, Gino and Ariely measured the participants' personality traits. Which of the following personality traits do you think was most related to cheating behavior (and why?): (1) Intelligence; (2) Creativity; (3) Extraversion; or (4) Impulsivity.

References

Gino, F., & Ariely, D. (2012). The dark side of creativity: Original thinkers can be more dishonest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(3), 445-459.

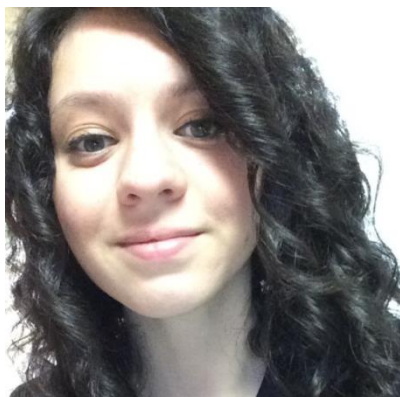
Ingham, A. G., Levinger, G., Graves, J., & Peckman, V. (1974). The Ringelmann effect: Studies of group size and group performance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 10, 371-384.

Motivation to pull on the rope decreased significantly (22%) when subjects were in groups compared with individual effort. This was true even when they were blindfolded and told that they were in a group (but were really alone). This phenomenon is called "social loafing." Remind you of anything? (The dreaded Sneaky People: group project, perhaps...?) Creative people were most likely to cheat. Why? Creative types are good at coming up with justifications for their immoral behavior. The same results were observed in an advertising agency. Employees holding creative positions in the firm were more likely to report a willingness to engage in ethically questionable behaviors (like taking office supplies home).

ANSWERS

Psychology Puzzle

Maura Linehan



O N T N

Process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.

M S

Psych course that teaches you to recognize testable hypotheses, evaluate research and interpret data.

D U S

Psychology principles applied to human resources, management, and other business problems.

L

Defined the five levels of his famous hierarchy of needs.

A U

The part of the brain involved in forming, organizing, and storing memories.

T

Famous psychologist who described four stages of cognitive development.

-

The best honorary society at Robert Morris University

1. Use the clues on the right to fill in the missing words on the left.
2. Unscramble the circled letters to fill in the missing society name.

Sleeeeeeeep!

You know the feeling of pulling an all-nighter because of an important DP exam the next day. Three o'clock in the morning we are trying not to give into the temptation of the warm, cozy bed calling our name. Many college students pull all-nighters but few are aware of the physical and mental harm that it causes.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Sleep Research Society (2018) recommends you receive at least seven hours of sleep. But only 56% of adults sleep at least this long while 36% sleep only six hours or even less (Grandner, Seixas, Shetty, & Shenoy, 2016). Many college students probably fall in the 36% range.

According to Grandner (2018), lack of sleep is associated with an increase in cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes. Grandner also notes that lack of sleep leads to increases in smoking, alcohol use, and

unhealthy eating. Yet many are still unaware of how crucial sleep is.

The mental and emotional effects of lack of sleep are significant as well. Sleep deprivation is associated with increases in depression, stress, and anxiety (Grandner, 2018). Many students are stressed enough about day-to-day issues as it is that will only be made worse by insufficient sleep.

College students seem to believe that staying up all night studying will help them do better on exams. But in reality, there is a cost to sleep loss that will hurt them more than a poor exam grade.

Loss of sleep impairs attention and decision making (Grandner, 2018). Therefore, when it comes to taking the exam after little sleep the night before, we will have a hard time staying focused and choosing correct answers. Not to mention that sleeping is critical to consolidating and storing information we have experienced throughout the day

(National Sleep Foundation, 2018).

Sleep helps us transfer information to long-term memory. Processes during sleep eliminate unimportant information. This means that after we study, we should go to sleep so information becomes fully encoded.

The next time it is 3:00 AM, and your warm cozy bed calls your name, feel free to give into the temptation. Sleep is worth it in the end.

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Nora Barczak

RMU Psychology Club Update

A year full of fun! The *RMU Psychology Club* has had an eventful 2018-2019 year. Many meetings and many pizzas later, the psych club has reviewed a lot this year, including writing resumes, psychology programs at RMU, and graduate school. Along with those topics were presentations from RMU's *Hope Happens Here* and *Thrive*, as well as *Therapets* (who even brought in one of their dogs!)

In October of 2018, the annual *Psychosocial* occurred where students made stress balls, and enjoyed light refreshments, and got to know the psychology professors at Robert Morris. The event was a great success and there was lots of mingling

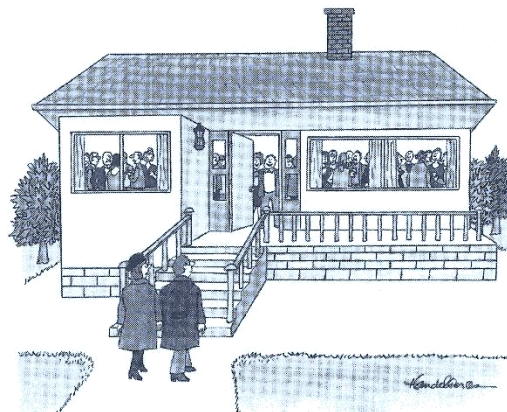
Psi Chi FYI

The RMU chapter of Psi Chi currently boasts 154 members and April 30, 2019 will induct 16 new members during its 12th Induction Ceremony.

between faculty and students!

In December of 2018, a few psychology club members attended the *National Psychology Museum* in Akron, Ohio where they got to see artifacts from the Stanford Prison Experiment, home movies of Sigmund Freud, and the simulated shock generator from Stanley Milgram's obedience studies!

The psychology club had one last event on April 9, 2019: the annual *Mocktail!* A panel of four professionals, including clinical psychology professor John Mathe, spoke about their



"I think I'm having pre-traumatic stress disorder."

Alley Ayers

experiences in the psychology field and answered questions from students! Students had the opportunity to spend time with the professionals one-on-one while enjoying some refreshments provided by the psychology club officers. The psychology club officers were pleased to end the year with such a successful and informative event!

The officers and members have had another great year and look forward to what the future holds for the psychology club in the 2019-2020 year!

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